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SUBJECT: GOS OFFICIALS DISCUSS CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES WITH DRS. WATSON AND DIXON AHEAD OF MEM2 MEETING

REF: SECSTATE 05908

SUMMARY

¶11. (SBU) On January 18 OES Climate Negotiator Dr. Harlan Watson and CEQ-NSC Senior Coordinator for Energy Security and Climate Change Dr. Robert Dixon met with representatives from the Government of Slovenia (GOS) to discuss preparations for the various climate change meetings that will take place during Slovenia's EU presidency, including the upcoming Second Major Economies Meeting (MEM2) scheduled for January 29-31 in Honolulu. Watson and Dixon met with MFA Director of the Americas Division Ambassador Roman Kirn, as well as Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning Janez Podobnik. In both meetings Watson and Dixon stressed the importance of Slovenia's leadership in managing the processes involving energy and climate issues. They emphasized the need to make concrete progress at the upcoming meetings and assured the Slovenes that MEM is designed to complement existing climate change processes, in particular the UNFCCC. GOS officials cautioned that Slovenia does not have the same authority on climate change issues as some of the larger EU member states, but noted that it has set discussion of energy and climate change as one of the top priorities for its EU presidency. Stressing that they hoped to make a connection between the MEM process and the U.S.-EU Summit, the Slovene officials said that the GOS hopes to play a constructive role in the debate to help achieve solid deliverables for the Summit. END SUMMARY

Looking at Energy/Climate As a Deliverable for U.S.-EU Summit

¶12. (SBU) Kirn told Watson and Dixon that the energy and climate change would be one of the key transatlantic issues during Slovenia's EU presidency. Kirn said that Slovenia hoped to use its presidency to encourage high level dialogue between the U.S. and the EU on the issue. Kirn noted that the U.S. and EU have made a lot of progress on the climate change issue since the U.S.-EU summit in Washington last April and that Slovenia seeks to build on those advancements.

Kirn expressed the hope that future U.S.-EU progress on climate change would complement existing processes. Dixon assured Kirn that MEM is designed to complement existing processes and that it would use the Bali action plan as a guideline. Kirn said he was glad to see that MEM process was part of the UN process to lead to a post-2012 framework. Both Watson and Dixon urged Slovenia to exercise strong

leadership to make progress on these difficult issues.

Managing the Climate Change Calendar

¶3. (SBU) Dr. Watson and Dr. Dixon expressed concern about the need to manage the complex climate calendar in the upcoming months. They offered U.S support to GOS in managing the calendar during Slovenia's EU presidency. Watson mentioned that there would be four meetings over the coming year in preparation for Copenhagen COP in December 2009. Although the exact dates for some of these events have not been set, Watson indicated that there is likely to be a Leaders Summit in mid-2008. Both the U.S. experts and the MFA agreed on the utility of aiming for deliverables for the U.S.-EU summit scheduled for sometime in June. Dixon emphasized the need for concrete action and suggested that the U.S. and EU expand the March 3 high level dialogue on energy to either include climate or hold a high level dialogue on climate back-to-back in order to discuss possible deliverables for the U.S.-EU summit. Kirn did not commit on the timing of the sustainable development and climate high level dialogue, but said Slovenia was flexible. He agreed on the need to lay the foundation for joint action and pledged to work closely with Washington to promote U.S.-EU cooperation on the issue.

Preparing for MEM2

¶4. (SBU) In their meeting with Minister Janez Podobnik, who was joined by Environment Undersecretary Andrej Kranjc and Bostjan Paradiz, Watson and Dixon focused on preparations for the upcoming MEM2 in Honolulu. Minister Podobnik informed Watson and Dixon that he would unfortunately not be able to

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attend the event, but that Andrej Kranjc would lead Slovenia's delegation in his stead. Podobnik commented that the MEM process was an important contribution to post-Bali action. Podobnik reiterated that climate change is a priority for Slovenia's Presidency. He mentioned that he had been in touch with the Environmental Ministers from Germany, France and the U.K. and planned to visit Rome next week. Paradiz expressed concern that the UNFCCC process maintain primacy, and Dixon assured him that the U.S. is mindful of that, supports the Framework Convention, and seeks to find the balance between the two processes. The U.S. is looking for concrete deliverables in the MEM. Watson and Dixon stressed that success would have to include China and India.

¶5. (U) Podobnik inquired whether the U.S. would be able to accommodate a larger EU delegation. (Note: Kranjc participated in MEM1 and at Bali. End Note.) Kranjc said Slovenia's delegation representing the EU presidency would include the following delegates, which responds to reftel:

--Mr. Andrej Kranjc, Slovenia
--Mr. Bostjan Paradiz, Slovenia
--Mr. Tadej Furlan, Slovenia
--Mr. Thomas Becker, Denmark
--Mr. Bo Lidegard, Denmark
--Mr. Humberto Rosa, Portugal
--Mr. Fausto Brito e Abreu, Portugal (Note: Embassy Lisbon has informed us that Fausto Brito e Abreu will not attend. It is uncertain at the moment who from the Portuguese Ministry will take his place. There is the possibility that one delegate from Poland will attend, but the Poles have not contacted Kranjc. End Note.)

¶6. (U) Dr. Watson and Dr. Dixon have cleared this cable.
COLEMAN